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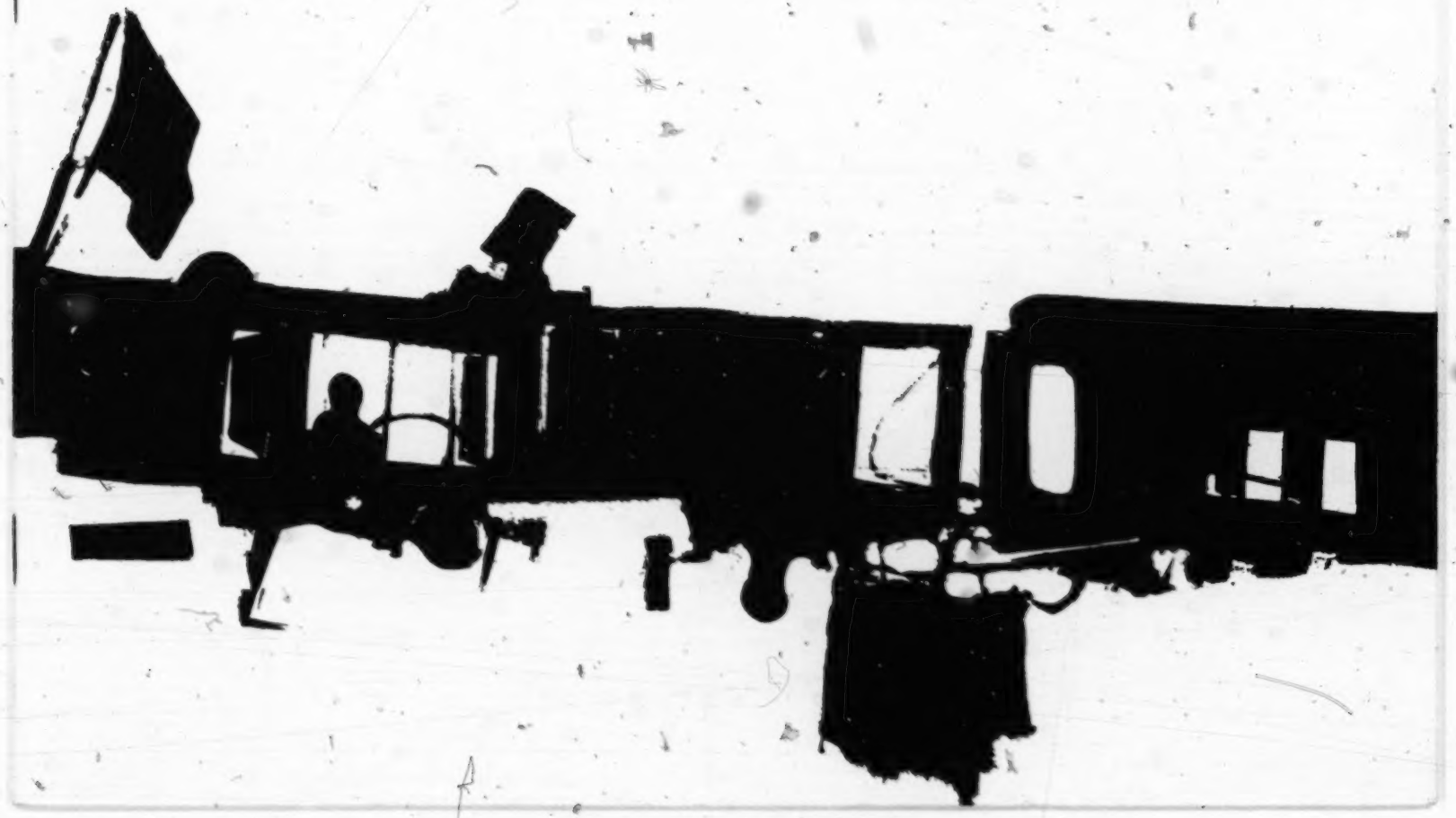
AMERICAN PAINTINGS FROM THE
BLOEDEL COLLECTION



AMERICAN PAINTINGS FROM THE BLOEDEL COLLECTION

LEEDS CITY ART GALLERY
10 April – 16 May 1965

CHELSEA SCHOOL OF ART
31 May – 3 July 1965

foreword

First and foremost we would like to record our gratitude to Mr. Lawrence H. Bloedel of Williamstown, Mass., for allowing his collection of American paintings to be seen in Leeds. The original idea of holding a small exhibition at the University quickly germinated, with the kindly help and encouragement of the owner, and flowered into the present show at the City Art Gallery.

Not only does the Bloedel collection contain important and representative paintings by artists, some of whose names are little known particularly in the north of England, but it bears the stamp of personal taste. Thus we may enjoy, not only the work of the artist, but also the subtly unifying taste of a sensitive patron.

We should also like to thank Mr. Bloedel for his very generous financial help. The total cost of the exhibition has been shared between him, the University and the City of Leeds and we are proud that this co-operative effort has been so pleasantly realised. We owe a further debt to Mr. Bloedel, and in this Mr. Lawrence Gowing of Chelsea College of Art would like to be associated, for allowing his pictures to be seen in London before they are returned to the United States.

Professor J. W. McCoubrey, Associate Professor, University of Pennsylvania, kindly consented to write the introduction to the catalogue for which we are very grateful. All the painters here exhibited are represented in American public collections. For the sake of brevity we have, in the catalogue, referred only to representation in British public collections.

Sir Roger Stevens
Quentin Bell

Alderman Arthur Adamson
Robert Rowe

introduction

The Bloedel Collection consists of paintings produced in one decade (1953-1962) by three generations of American artists. The oldest of them, Georgia O'Keeffe (b. 1887) and Charles Sheeler (b. 1883) could look back on long, distinguished careers and recall from direct experience the first wave of European modernism which was brought home to the American public by the famous Armory Show held in New York in 1913. Others less advanced in years could remember the retreat into artistic isolation which began with the collapse of Wilson's program and continued into the depression-ridden thirties. The youngest of those represented (b. 1928) formed their styles during and just after the Second World War when a new internationalism possessed our painters and led to the formation of a new kind of American painting, Abstract Expressionism.

None of the artists included who were active before the 1939 war submitted completely to the domination of Paris or became involved in painting what was called "the American scene." Each of them contended individually with the overwhelming influence of Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Leger or Miro. Sheeler and O'Keeffe gradually turned from an early, more abstract style to discover in the man-made environment of America the clear planes and sharp edges of Synthetic Cubism as it had developed in Paris between 1912 and 1921. Milton Avery and Balcomb Green were active during the thirties in a struggle to maintain the values of abstract painting, while a group known as the Regionalists were celebrating rural America and others were discovering "social content" in the slums and bread lines of our cities in a style distantly evoked here only by Jack Levine's *Judges* of 1954.

The youngest of these painters (b. 1928) experienced, if not the opening phase of Abstract Expressionism, its enormous impact during the early fifties. One impetus during the war toward the creation of this new painting was the rejection both of provincialism, "the Corn Belt Academy", and of the empty formalism which European innovations of the early century—imitated at a distance—were beginning to produce. A painting was demanded which, free from the limitations of domestic setting, would be heroic in scale and, disengaged from specifically local references, would be concerned with universal themes drawn from myth and prehistory. The work of Mark Tobey, well known in the forties, with its calligraphic evocations of ancient symbols was already tending in this direction although his influence was not a decisive one. Some vestige of this early phase in the emergence of the post-war school of American painting clings to the 1958 painting of the late William Baziotes.

Contributing to the new spirit of internationalism in the war years was the presence in New York of several major European painters and of Andre Breton whose customary activity on behalf of Surrealism was perhaps more influential than the individual style of any of the new arrivals. On the huge canvasses of the Americans began to appear free, sweeping applications of paint, seemingly random and unpremeditated, but in fact governed by the artists' taste and knowledge which told him how far signs of disordered experience derived from the Surrealists' interest in the subconscious and

the accidental, could be admitted and how much had to remain of traditional pictorial order. The principal painters involved in this movement, Pollock, Kline, De Kooning and the more meditative Gottlieb, Guston and Rothko are not represented, but what they accomplished brought American painting for the first time to international prominence and emulation, and in the decade of activity spanned by the pictures of this collection, much of what was painted in America was in one way or another responsive to their work.

Closest to the mainstream of this new painting are *Sun Games* of Theodoros Stamos and *Tyr* by Esteban Vicente with their apparently loose organisation and seemingly tentative execution. With these may be grouped *Play Street* by Gene Vass who was among a number of younger painters attracted to it toward the mid-fifties. Richard Diebenkorn was one of the first to desert the new style, but in his figures and landscapes, as in those of two other San Francisco painters, David Park and Elmer Bischoff, there is a sense of scale and a robust involvement with paint which may be traceable to the vigor and freedom of the New York painters. Green, with Avery a supporter of abstract art in the thirties, was close to the new movement in its early days, and the fluid, amorphous figures in his pictures, which seem at first glance abstract, reflects this involvement. Other painters like Abraham Rattner, Loren MacIver and the perennial prize-winner, Karl Knaths, whose styles were well established in the forties went their own ways remaining for the most part closer to the traditions of Cubism.

It is in the nature of America and of its painting that no collection of American art would be complete without the inclusion of artists like Yutaka Ohashi from Japan and Tseng Yu-Ho from China who are among a number of Asian artists at work in the United States. Typically, in their delicacy and elegant handling of paint they blend native sensibility with western influences rather more Parisian than American. Finally there is the evidence of Walter Murch's *Medley* that an interest in realism, which has characterized American painting throughout its history, was still active. The Bloedel Collection, while avoiding extremes, thus reflects the richness and complexity of American painting during the last decade—even offering, it should be added, an indication of the new wave of "Pop Art" in the droll *Double Portrait* of Marcia Marcus.

It is almost impossible to generalize from such diversity, but the English observer may detect in these pictures a breadth and spaciousness, a reluctance to employ tight, controlling geometry, an unwillingness to give an image either a complete statement or dominance over its spatial environment, and finally a certain tendency to use the medium boldly and even impatiently rather than to exploit it as a sensuous substance in itself. These are characteristics which may reflect in part the experience of living in America, its restless pace, the measureless spaces of the land and the impermanence of what is built and rebuilt upon it.

John W. McCoubrey
Associate Professor, University of Pennsylvania

1 Milton Avery

born Altmar, New York, 1893
at Hartford, Connecticut, from 1905
studied with the Connecticut League of Art Students 1913
preferred to paint independently; worked by night to paint by day
moved to New York 1925
attracted a group of younger artists, including Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, who met weekly for criticism and discussion
retrospective exhibition, Baltimore Museum 1952
Ford Foundation exhibition, Whitney Museum, New York, 1960
represented in the Tate Gallery collection
died 1965

Sea Gazers 1956
oil on canvas, 30×44 in.
signed *Milton Avery 1956*

2 William Baziotes

born Pittsburgh 1912
studied at the National Academy of Design, New York
died 1963

Sand 1957
oil on canvas, 48×36 in.
signed *Baziotes*, dated on verso

3 Elmer Bischoff

born Berkeley, California, 1916
studied at University of California, Berkeley, 1939
with Eighth Air Force in England 1942–6
taught in San Francisco, Berkeley and Marysville, California
at present teaching at the University of California, Berkeley

Country Room 1957
oil on canvas, 49×58 in.
signed and dated on verso
Elmer Bischoff 3/57

4 Morris Broderson

born Los Angeles 1928
studied at Berkeley and Los Angeles schools for the deaf; Pasadena Art Institute 1943; the University of California and the Jepson Art Institute, Los Angeles

Kabuki II 1961
oil on canvas, 54×72 in.
signed and dated *Broderson 61*

5 Carroll Cloar

born Earle, Arkansas, 1913
studied at Southwestern College, Memphis; Memphis Academy of Arts and Art Students' League, New York
travelled extensively in Latin America and Europe

Kite Flyers 1961
tempera on board, 24×34 in.
signed *Carroll Cloar*, dated label on verso

6 Edward Corbett

born Chicago 1919
studied at Richmond, California, and the California School of Fine Arts
served in the Army, Navy and Merchant Marines 1941–4
taught at San Francisco State Teachers College 1946; California School of Fine Arts 1947–51; University of California; Mount Holyoake College, South Hadley, Massachusetts; University of Minnesota
awarded a Rosenberg Fellowship enabling him to live in New Mexico

Provincetown No. 3 1959
oil on canvas, 50×40 in.
unsigned, dated label on verso

7 Richard Diebenkorn

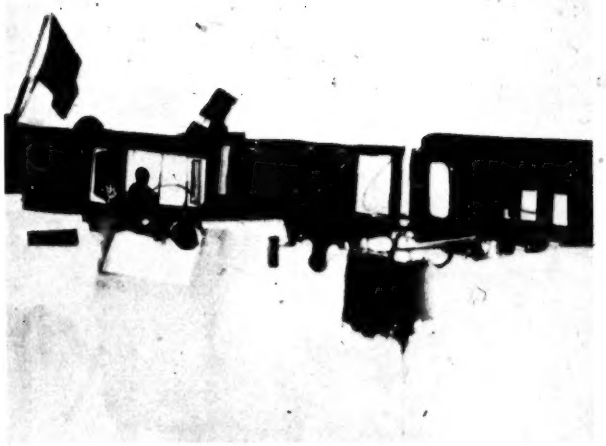
born Portland, Oregon, 1922
studied at Stanford University 1940–3; University of California 1943–4; California School of Fine Arts 1946
taught at California School of Fine Arts, California College of Arts and Crafts; artist-in-residence at Stanford University 1963–4

Bath 1960 *(illustrated)*
oil on canvas, 67×62 in.
signed and dated *R.D. 60*

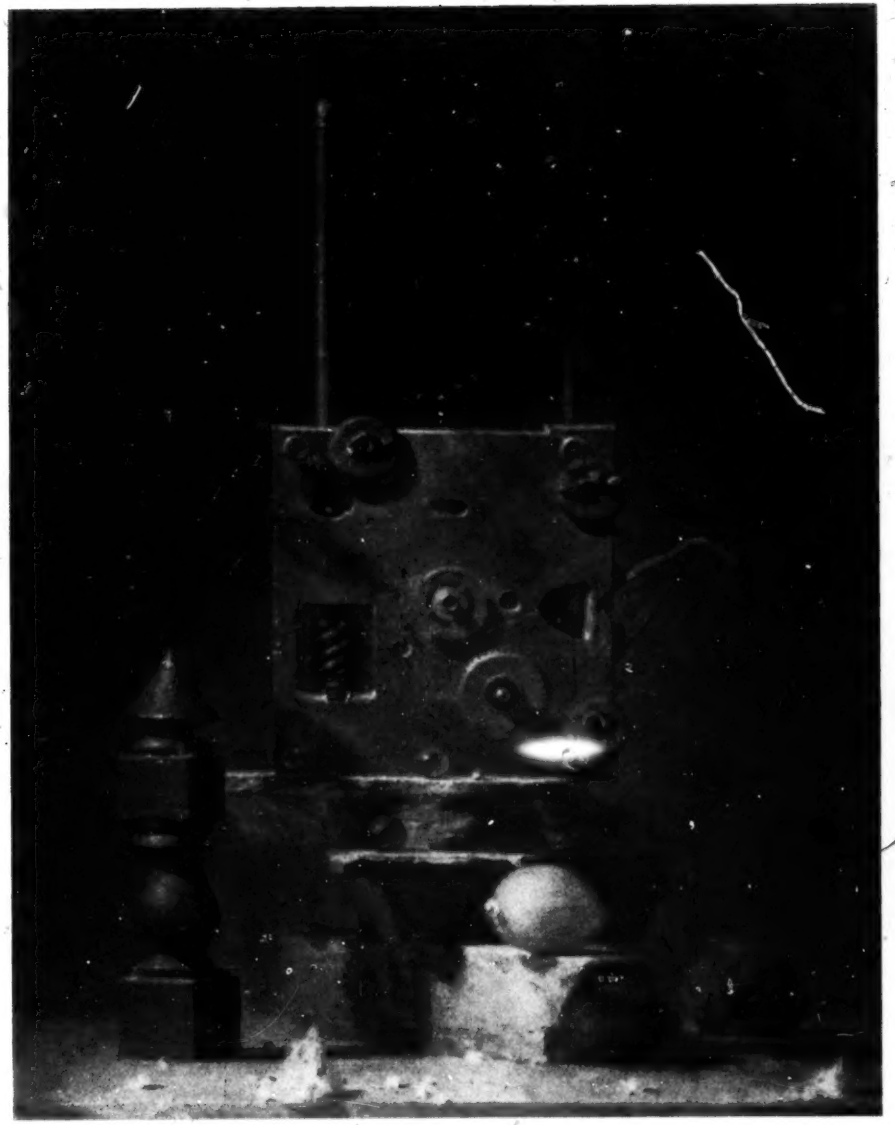
8 Lee Gatch

born Baltimore 1902
studied at the Maryland Institute of Fine Arts 1920–4
in France 1924 studied with Andre Lhote and Moise Kisling
included in Venice Biennale 1950 and 1956
retrospective exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1960

Theatre 1955
oil on canvas, 19×30 in.
signed *Gatch to Merryman* (the artist's daughter)
dated label on verso



12 Black Flag Train 1959 *John Hultberg*



17 Medley circa 1954 *Walter Tandy Murch*

16 Double Portrait 1962
Marcia Marcus

20 Riverbank 1956 *David Park*

7 Bath 1960 *Richard Diebenkorn*

24 Birdie in a Red Shawl 1953 *Larry Rivers*

9 Cleve Gray

born New York City 1918
studied in New York; Phillips Academy, Andover; Princetown 1936–40
served in England, France and Germany 1943–6; studied intermittently with Andre Lhote and Jacques Villon
in France and Italy 1948; Spain 1958

Maratea No. 12 1961
oil on canvas, 60×84 in.
signed and dated *Gray '61*

10 Balcomb Green

born Niagara Falls, New York, 1904
lived in Iowa and Colorado 1905–20
studied at Syracuse University 1922–6; Vienna 1926
at Academie de la grande Chaumiere, Paris, 1931–2
returned to New York 1933
first chairman American Abstract Artists 1936–7 and again 1940–1
retrospective exhibition, Whitney Museum, New York, 1961

Two Men 1954–6
oil on canvas, 40×60 in.
unsigned, dated label on verso

11 John Heliker

born Yonkers, New York, 1909
studied at the Art Students' League, New York
taught at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center
now teaching at Columbia University
awarded Prix de Rome Fellowship 1948, Guggenheim Fellowship 1951
retrospective exhibition, Whitney Museum, New York, 1964

Still Life 1962
oil on canvas, 46×46 in.
signed *Heliker*, dated label on verso

12 John Hultberg

born Berkeley, California, 1922
studied at Fresno College, California, 1939–43
served with U.S. Navy in Pacific 1943–6
at Art Students' League, New York, 1949–51
moved to Paris 1954
included in Venice Biennale 1956 and awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship
one-man exhibition, I.C.A. Gallery, London, 1956

Black Flag Train 1959 *(illustrated)*
oil on canvas, 40×50 in.
signed and dated on verso, *Hultberg 1959*

13 Karl Knaths
born Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 1891
studied at Art Institute of Chicago and in New York
settled in Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1919
has never travelled outside the United States

Morning Frost 1958
oil on canvas, 40×50 in.
signed *Karl Knaths*, dated on verso

14 Jack Levine
born Boston 1915
studied with Denman Ross in Boston
retrospective touring exhibition shown in various American cities 1954
one-man show at Second Mexican Biennale 1960

The Judge 1954
oil on canvas, 43×49 in.
signed *J. Levine*, dated label on verso

15 Loren MacIver
born New York 1909
studied at Art Students' League, New York, 1919
in New York and North Truro, Massachusetts, 1931–40
at Key West, Florida, 1939–40
in Europe 1948
retrospective exhibition, Whitney Museum, New York, 1953

Les Marroniers 1954
oil on canvas, 51×64 in.
signed *MacIver*, dated label on verso

16 Marcia Marcus
born New York 1928
studied at New York University; Cooper Union Art School and the Art Students' League, New York
lives in New York

Double Portrait 1962 *(illustrated)*
oil on canvas, 68×78 in.
unsigned

17 Walter Tandy Murch

born Toronto 1907
studied in Ontario; at the Art Students' League, New York;
under Arshile Gorky at Grand Central School, New York
became United States citizen 1948
taught at Pratt Institute, New York, 1953–61; New York University 1961;
Boston University
included in Venice Biennale 1956

Medley circa 1954 *(illustrated)*
oil on canvas, 27×20 in.
signed *Walter Murch*

18 Yutaka Ohashi

born Hiroshima 1923
studied at the Tokyo Art School 1941–5 and, as exchange student,
at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
awarded James William Paige Scholarship 1955 entitling him to two years
study in Europe

Paris No. 1 1956
oil on canvas, 26×36 in.
signed *Ohashi*, dated on verso

19 Georgia O'Keeffe

born Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, 1887
studied at Chatham Episcopal Institute, Virginia;
Art Institute of Chicago with John Vanderpoel 1904–5;
Art Students' League with William Merritt Chase 1907–8
taught at Amarillo, Texas; University of Virginia; Columbia
College, South Carolina; West Texas Normal College, Canyon, Texas
travelled extensively in Europe, Mexico, Peru, Hawaii, Bermuda and Japan in
1960
lives in Abiquiu, New Mexico
retrospective exhibitions: Art Institute of Chicago 1943; Museum of Modern
Art, New York, 1946; Dallas Museum of Fine Arts 1953; Worcester
Museum of Art 1960
represented in the Tate Gallery collection

It was Blue and Green 1960
oil on canvas, 30×40 in.
unsigned, dated label on verso

20 David Park

born Boston 1911
studied at Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1928
taught in California 1931–6; Boston 1936–41; San Francisco 1943–52;
Berkeley, California, 1955–9
died 1960
memorial exhibition 1960–1 and retrospective exhibition 1961–2
both at Staempfli Gallery, New York

Riverbank 1956 *(illustrated)*
oil on canvas, 58×68 in.
signed and dated *Park 56*

21 Reginald Pollack

born Middle Village, Long Island, 1924
awards and exhibitions in Paris 1949–63
represented in Glasgow University collection

Animals on a Beach 1962
oil on canvas, 50×69½ in.
signed *Pollack*, dated label on verso

22 Fairfield Porter

born Winnetka, Illinois, 1907
studied at Art Students' League, New York, and History of Art at Harvard University
published art criticism and poems from 1951

Children in a Field 1960
oil on canvas, 46×46 in.
signed and dated *Fairfield Porter 1960*

23 Abraham Rattner

born Poughkeepsie, New York, 1895
studied in Poughkeepsie; architecture at George Washington University and art at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts 1916–7
served with 40th Engineers 1917–8
returned to Pennsylvania Academy and awarded Cresson travelling scholarship 1920 enabling him to work in France where he stayed until the second war
French Ministry of Fine Arts bought his *Card Party* for the Jeu de Paume 1935
escaped from Paris late 1939 and returned to New York
toured America 1940 with Henry Miller
artist-in-residence, American Academy in Rome 1951
taught at University of Illinois 1952–3 and at Michigan State University from 1956

Composition in Blue No. 2 1959
oil on canvas, 31½×39 in.
signed in cryptogram and signed and dated on verso

24 Larry Rivers

born New York 1923
served with U.S. Army Air Corps 1942–3
studied at Juilliard School of Music 1944–5
studied with Hans Hofmann and later at New York University 1947–8
one-man exhibition at Gimpel Fils, London, 1962
represented in the Tate Gallery collection

Birdie in a Red Shawl 1953 *(Illustrated)*
oil on canvas, 53×65 in.
unsigned, dated label on verso

25 Charles Sheeler

born Philadelphia 1883
studied with William Merritt Chase at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts
artist-in-residence, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, 1947
lives in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

On a Connecticut Theme 1958
oil on canvas, 19¼×29½ in.
signed and dated *Sheeler 1958*

26 Theodoros Stamos

born New York City 1922
studied at Stuyvesant High School, New York
began to work as a sculptor, changed to painting
awarded Tiffany Fellowship 1951
lives in New York

Sun Games 1957–8
oil on canvas, 45×69 in.
signed *Stamos*, dated label on verso

27 Reuben Tam

born Island of Kauai, Hawaii, 1916
studied at University of Hawaii 1937
graduate work at California School of Fine Arts; New School, New York; Columbia University
taught in Hawaii 1938–41
instructor in Art School of Brooklyn Museum from 1947
awarded Guggenheim Fellowship 1948

Mountain Air 1961
oil on canvas, 45×50¼ in.
signed *tam*, dated on verso

28 Mark Tobey

born Centerville, Wisconsin, 1890
worked and studied in spare time in Chicago
moved to New York 1911
taught at Cornish School, Seattle, 1923
in Europe 1925–7
in Seattle, Chicago and New York 1927–30
at Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon, 1931–9
studied Chinese calligraphy in Shanghai 1934 and brush work in a Japanese Zen monastery
returned to Seattle 1939
retrospective exhibitions, San Francisco Palace of Legion of Honour 1951 and Art Institute of Chicago 1955
in Paris 1955; Seattle 1956–7
Venice Biennale 1958 awarded first prize of the Commune of Venice
retrospective exhibitions at Seattle 1959; Musee des Arts Decoratifs, Paris 1961; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1962

Calligraphic 1956
tempera on board, 36×23½ in.
signed and dated *Tobey 56*

29 Tseng Yu-Ho

born Peking 1923
studied at Fukien; graduate work in Chinese art history and literature at Amoy University, Fukien; Peking University; People's University of China
moved to Honolulu 1949
in Europe 1956–7; 1959–60; 1963
adviser to Department of Chinese Art, Honolulu Academy of Arts

***My Garden* 1961**
gouache and collage on board, , 36×71 in.
unsigned, dated label on verso

30 Gene Vass

born Buffalo, New York, 1922
studied at University of Buffalo; Fellowship, Yale University, 1950
taught at Albright Art School, University of Buffalo, 1956–8
lived in Rome 1958–9

***Play Street* 1961**
oil on canvas, 58×41½ in.
signed and dated *Vass LXI*

31 Esteban Vicente

born Segovia, Spain, 1906
studied sculpture at School of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid
changed to painting
studio in Paris 1927–32
moved to United States 1936
taught in Puerto Rico; at University of California in Los Angeles and Berkeley; Queens College, New York; director of the High Field School, Falmouth, Massachusetts
teaches at New York and Yale Universities
represented in the Tate Gallery collection

***Tyr* 1960**
oil on canvas, 60×48 in.
signed and dated on verso

32 Jane Wilson

born Seymour, Iowa, 1924
studied at University of Iowa 1945–7
instructor in Art History, University of Iowa

***Water Grasses* 1961**
oil on canvas, 50×60 in.
signed *Jane Wilson*, dated on verso